

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application.

1-29. (Canceled).

30. (Previously presented) A system for distributing video content, the system comprising:

a portable video content storage device upon which digitally encoded video content is securely stored to prevent unauthorized access;

an interactive kiosk configured to be located in a public location, the kiosk further configured to receive and access the portable video content storage device, the kiosk further configured to securely store video content on the portable video content storage device; and

a set-top box configured to receive the portable video content storage device, the set-top box further configured to access the securely stored video content from the portable video content storage device, the set-top box further configured to provide the video content as an output signal to a video display,

wherein the set-top box is further configured to write content use data to the portable video content storage device, and wherein the interactive kiosk is further configured to read content use data from the portable video content storage device.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Original) The system of Claim 30, wherein the portable video content storage device consists essentially of a passive storage media unit.

33. (Original) The system of Claim 30, wherein the encoded video content stored on the storage medium is encrypted to prevent unauthorized access.

34. (Previously presented) A method of obtaining and using video content, the method comprising:

- connecting a portable video content storage device configured for storing digitally encoded video content to an interactive kiosk in a public location;
- selecting video content through the kiosk in order to cause the kiosk to store the video content on the portable video content storage device;
- disconnecting the portable video content storage device from the kiosk;
- connecting the portable video content storage device to a set-top box in a private location;
- causing the set-top box to access, decode, and output as a video signal at least a portion of the selected video content; and
- writing content use data to the portable video content storage device.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 34, further comprising reconnecting the portable video content storage device to the kiosk such that content use data written to the portable video content storage device by the set-top box can be read by the kiosk.

37. (Original) A hand-held dedicated secure video content storage device comprising:

a mass storage module configured to store at least about an hour of at least television-suitable quality digitally encoded video content;

a controller configured to prevent unauthorized access to the mass storage module, the controller further configured to permit video content to be written to the mass storage module by a compatibly configured interactive kiosk; a hand-held housing containing the mass storage module and the controller; and

a communication port mounted in the housing, the communication port configured to be removably connected to the interactive kiosk to thereby establish communication with the interactive kiosk.

38. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the communication port comprises an electrical connector.

39. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the communication port comprises an optical connector.

40. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the controller is configured to authenticate the kiosk.

41. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the controller is further configured to enable video content to be read from the mass storage module by a compatibly configured and authorized settop box.

42. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the mass storage module is a disk drive.

43. (Original) The device of Claim 42, wherein the controller is further configured to separately limit read and write access to the disk drive.

44. (Original) The device of Claim 42, wherein the controller comprises a data buffer configured to buffer data as the data is transferred to or from the disk drive.

45. (Original) The device of Claim 37, further comprising stored content use data relating to the use of video content stored on the mass storage module.

46. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the controller is configured to limit access to the mass storage module based at least upon a content rating of a content unit.

47. (Original) The device of Claim 37, wherein the controller is configured to maintain a set of user preferences relating to the format of content units to be stored on the mass storage module.

48. (Original) A set-top box for accessing video content stored on a portable video content storage device, the set-top box comprising:

a receptacle configured to receive the portable video content storage device, wherein the portable video content storage device can be inserted and removed by a user;

a video decoder module configured to decode the video content to produce an output signal; and

a processor configured to control the video decoder module, wherein the processor is further configured to accumulate content use data based at least upon an amount of use of the video content and to store the accumulated content use data on the portable video content storage device.

49. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 48, wherein the processor is further configured to control the portable video content storage device.

50. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 48, further comprising a decryption module configured to decrypt encrypted video content.

51. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 48, further comprising a translation module configured to translate a nonstandard communications protocol used by the portable video content storage device into an industry standard communications protocol.

52. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 48, further comprising an authentication module configured to provide authentication information to the portable video content storage device.

53. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 48, wherein the output signal comprises video information and audio information.

54. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 48, wherein the processor is further configured to access user preferences stored on the portable video content storage device.

55. (Original) The set-top box of Claim 54, wherein the processor is further configured to modify the user preferences.

56. (Original) The device of Claim 48, wherein the processor is configured to limit access to a content unit stored on the portable video content storage device based at least upon a content rating of the content unit.

57. (Original) A method of presenting video content and providing information related to the use of the video content, the method comprising:

- receiving in a user accessible receptacle a portable video content Storage device storing video content;

- reading a portion of the video content from the portable video content storage device;

- presenting the portion of the video content;

- accumulating present content use data; and

- transferring the present content use data onto the portable video content storage device.

58. (Original) The method of Claim 57, further comprising:

- reading prior content use data from the portable video content storage device; and

- amending the prior content use data to incorporate the present content use data.

59. (Original) The method of Claim 58, further comprising transferring the amended content use data onto the portable video content storage device.

60. (Original) The method of Claim 57, wherein the content use data comprises a listing of executed user commands.

61. (Original) The method of Claim 57, wherein the content use data associates a number of uses with a portion of the video content.